**Lakeshore Housing Alliance**

**BYLAWS**

1. **Mission Statement**

*The Lakeshore Housing Alliance (LHA) is a collaborative group dedicated to identifying needs, developing a vision, encouraging coordination of responses, and advocating for safe, accessible, affordable housing and services in the Ottawa County area.*

1. **Purpose**

The LHA shall coordinate efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing and to alleviate homelessness in the Ottawa County area. Its work will include data collection to document needs, education of its members and the public about affordable housing and homeless programs and needs, information sharing, advocacy about issues of mutual concern, and other tasks to promote the mission of the group.

The LHA will serve as the Continuum of Care planning body for Ottawa County and will annually design a plan for updating the gaps analysis and the Continuum of Care strategy. The LHA will make recommendations for funding allocations, and project prioritization to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), and others.

1. **Definitions**

The LHA is concerned about people in need of affordable housing. The populations in greatest need are those defined as:

*Homeless persons* (See Homeless Crosswalk)

*Chronically homeless* (see HUD definition of Chronically Homeless)

*Precariously Housed* persons are individuals or families at risk of becoming homeless within 30 days. Precariously housed persons include those individuals and families without resources who are living in the homes of others either in an illegal, or temporary, situation.

*Very low and low income people in need of housing assistance* will be defined using current HUD income limits. Very low income households are defined as families or individuals with incomes at or below 50% of Ottawa County median income. Low income households are defined as those with incomes between 50% and 80% of the Ottawa County median income. In general, households eligible for most housing assistance programs will be those who qualify as low or very low income.

**4. Continuum of Care**

The LHA and its member organizations will work to offer a variety of housing opportunities including:

*Emergency Shelter or Interim Housing* provides temporary housing for up to 90 days to individuals and families in need.

*Transitional housing* is defined as temporary housing (less than 24 months) enriched with supportive services to assist special populations to be successful in obtaining and remaining in housing. This service enriched housing is designed for individuals and families recovering from homelessness; recovering from chemical dependency; domestic violence or living with mental illness, developmental or physical disabilities, or AIDS/HIV.

*Permanent Supportive Housing* provides long term housing linked with supportive services for homeless individuals and families or homeless and disabled households.

*Affordable Housing:* For housing to be affordable, a household should be paying no more than 30% of the gross monthly income for housing expenses. Opportunities are available in the county to meet the needs of renters, potential homebuyers and homeowners such as:

* Rental assistance for households with a sudden reduction of income
* Foreclosure prevention services
* First month’s rent and security deposit for households moving out of homelessness
* Purchase assistance such as down payment assistance
* Affordable homeownership through existing programs
* Educational opportunities for first time homebuyers

**5.** **Housing First**

Housing programs offered by the LHA member organizations will be expected, to the extent reasonably possible, to align with a Housing First philosophy. LHA’s Housing First philosophy is as follows:

*We believe that all persons deserve access to decent, affordable, safe, stable housing, and to the supportive services needed to maintain permanent housing.*

*The housing services community should prioritize four essential activities:*

* *providing screening, crisis intervention, and emergency services to individuals and families who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness,*
* *preventing those at risk of homelessness from losing their housing whenever possible,*
* *providing interim housing to those who are homeless while assisting them with securing permanent housing as quickly as possible, and*
* *offering ongoing supportive services focused on maintaining housing stability to individuals and households in need of such services.*

**6. Membership**

Membership in the LHA is open to any organization or individual interested in housing needs and housing-related services in the Ottawa County area.

Membership: Any organization or individual can become a member or maintain membership of the OAHC:

* by attending at least 50% of regularly scheduled quarterly LHA meetings in the last 12 months
* or, for organizations and individuals with little or no attendance history, by being recommended for membership by a current member and then having a majority of the membership approve the recommendation. All member organizations are expected to serve on at least one committee or taskforce of the OAHC. Attendance at committee and/or taskforce meetings may satisfy attendance requirements.

Memorandum of Understanding: Each member or member agency is asked to sign a membership form which details roles and responsibilities of membership.

Membership Recruitment:The intent of the LHA is to encourage inclusiveness and diversity among membership. Any member may propose a new member and membership is confirmed by majority vote of the active members.

Membership Retention**:** Membership continues as long as the member organization or individual meets membership requirements. An organization may formally withdraw from membership at any time.

All organizations attending the November 1999 inaugural meeting become charter members of the LHA.

1. **Voting**

Consensus will be sought when formal decisions are warranted or required in the course of conducting the business of the LHA. All formal decisions made during a scheduled meeting shall require the presence of a quorum, defined as at least 50% of members being present. When formal votes are needed, each member organization or individual shall be granted a single vote. For a formal motion to be adopted, it must be approved by at least 51% of those present, with the exception of bylaw amendments, which shall require approval by at least two-thirds of those present. Proposed by-laws amendments will be submitted in writing to all members at least 30 days prior to the meeting upon which the revisions will be voted.

Any action, with the exception of by-law amendments, may be taken without a meeting if the majority of the membership consents to the action in writing, including electronic correspondence. Consent of this nature has the force and effect of a meeting vote.

1. **Executive Committee and Staff**

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee will meet at least quarterly.

Co-Chair Persons: The members of the Executive Committee shall elect co-chair persons each year at the Executive Committee meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting, or other such date as designated by the membership.

Co-chair persons shall serve staggered two-year terms. Co-chair persons shall chair the quarterly meetings, ensure that the committees and/or ad-hoc committees make reports, and generally coordinate the yearly activities of the LHA. Efforts shall be made to recruit officers representing diverse geographical and service areas. Co-chairs may be re-elected at the discretion of the membership.

Executive Committee Members: There will be a range of five to nine members elected to serve staggered two year terms. Efforts shall be made to recruit officers representing diverse geographical and service areas. Executive Committee members may be re-elected at the discretion of the membership. The host agency will have non-voting membership on the Executive Committee.

Nominations: Nominations for vacant Executive Committee members and Co-Chairs will be solicited from members of the LHA and provided to the coordinator of the LHA. Those nominated will be contacted by the coordinator and will have the opportunity to accept or reject his/her nomination.

Elections: The Executive Committee will present a slate of eligible and willing candidates at the LHA’s annual meeting. Member organizations and individuals will vote to fill committee member vacancies.

Fiduciary Member: The fiduciaries of grants received by the LHA shall appoint one member to the executive committee. This appointment will endure throughout the term of the grant.

Coordinator: The membership of the LHA shall have the ability to create a staff position to coordinate data collection and yearly activities as the need arises. A fiduciary organization will be identified and approved by Executive Committee, and shall be required to monitor use and status pertaining to expenses associated with the Coordinator position.

1. **Committees**

The following are standing committees of the LHA:

Executive Committee

Allocation and Accountability Committee

HMIS Agency Administrators

The Coordinator and/or Executive Committee shall have the ability to create and dissolve adhoc task forces and/or committees as needed. The adhoc task forces and/or committees shall report on their activities to the LHA membership at bi-monthly meetings.

**10.** **Meetings**

The LHA shall meet the first Friday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at a time and place determined by the membership.

The Coordinator will ensure notice of all bi-monthly, annual and special meetings by mail, fax, and/or e-mail to the LHA members approximately one week prior to any meeting*.*

Co-chairs shall have the ability to call special meetings as the need arises, or at the request of three or more members.

Each year an annual meeting will be held and members of the Executive Committeewill be elected. The annual meeting shall occur in October or such other date as the membership approves.